



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO CELEBRATES NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK**

**ROCHESTER, NY** — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello proclaimed April 30 through May 6 as Small Business Week throughout Monroe County. Bello urges residents to "shop small" and support local entrepreneurs who serve as the backbone of the community's economy.

"Small Business Week recognizes the contributions our local small businesses make to our community and local economy," said County Executive Bello. "These businesses create jobs and drive economic growth – more than half of our region's workforce are employed by small businesses. They bring life, character and prosperity to our neighborhoods. I encourage our community to 'shop small' and support the nearly 20,000 small businesses in our area – not just this week, but every week."

Assisting small businesses is a key priority of the Bello administration. During the pandemic, County Executive Bello spearheaded the Fast Forward grant programs, which provided nearly 3,000 enterprises with grants of up to \$20,000 to cover financial losses. Suburban small businesses were provided with forgivable working capital loans of up to \$25,000. To help ensure all business owners can find success, the county initiated a local Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Certification program last year, and has certified more than 300 of these enterprises so far.

Monroe County Economic Development, a division of county government that focuses on supporting businesses, continues to offer an array of services and programs that connect businesses to the most advantageous financing programs and incentives. Offerings include programs that assist with buying equipment, purchasing or constructing buildings, exporting/importing and job training.

Additionally, the Monroe County APEX Accelerator provides free education and training for businesses interested in participating in U.S. Department of Defense and other government contracts — federal, state and local.

*"I've received a lot of support from the Apex Accelerator program run by Monroe County," said **Steven Service, owner of Alpha Graphics in Rochester**. Alpha Graphics is a certified service-disabled veteran-owned small business and a certified MWBE. "One of the things I'm trying to grow with my business is garnering government contracts. The Apex Accelerator has offered trainings, matchmaking and one-on-one counseling. I encourage*

*any business owner to reach out to Monroe County; they will be able to help you as they've helped me."*

*"Small Business Week allows us to reflect on the importance of small businesses in our community," said **Christine Vargas, owner of Vargas Associates**, a certified MWBE interior design, facilities project management, relocation management and furniture assessment and coordination company based in Rochester. "Monroe County has been a strong supporter of our team and the work we do for our clients. I'm honored to lead a small business in our community where I'm able to see that short line from the work we do to support our clients, to people putting food on their table and mortgages being paid. We are grateful to those who make the choice to invest in small businesses and give us the opportunity to prove our capabilities."*

*"County Executive Bello and his team have been very supportive of my team," said **Ike Cuyler, owner of janitorial services company Sheen and Shine**. Sheen and Shine is a certified MWBE and service-disabled veteran-owned small business. "We have really benefitted from the Apex Accelerator, and they really supported me in a situation where it was really confusing and they stepped up to the plate and helped get us certified as a service disabled veteran company. The county's help has been very beneficial to us."*

For detailed information about business assistance programs and eligibility criteria, visit: [monroecountybusiness.org](http://monroecountybusiness.org).

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